



submitted for obtaining EU financial contribution

Annex II: Control programme – Reduction of prevalence of Salmonella serotypes in certain poultry populations

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Member state : BELGIQUE-BELGIE

Disease Salmonella

Animal population Laying flocks of Gallus gallus

This program is multi annual :

Request of Union co-financing from beginning :

1. Contact data

Name Phone

Email Your job type within the CA :

Submission Date

06/12/2022 15:53:00

Submission Number

1670338380398-19137



Laying flocks of *Gallus gallus*

A. Technical information

By submitting this programme, the Member State (MS) attests that the relevant provisions of the EU legislation will be implemented during its entire period of approval, in particular:

- Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 on the control of *Salmonella* and other specified food-borne zoonotic agents,
- Regulation (EU) No 517/2011 implementing Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards a Union target for the reduction of the prevalence of *Salmonella* serotypes in laying hens of *Gallus gallus*,
- Regulation (EC) No 1177/2006 implementing Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 as regards requirements for the use of specific control methods in the framework of the national programmes for the control of *Salmonella* in poultry.

As a consequence, the following measures will be implemented during the whole period of the programme:

1. Aim of the programme

It is to implement all relevant measures in order to reduce the prevalence of *Salmonella* Enteritidis and *Salmonella* Typhimurium (including the serotypes with the antigenic formula 1,4,[5],12:i:-) in adult laying hens of *Gallus gallus* ('Union target') as follows:

- An annual minimum percentage of reduction of positive flocks of adult laying hens equal to at least 10% where the prevalence in the preceding year was less than 10%.
- An annual minimum percentage of reduction of positive flocks of adult laying hens equal to at least 20% where the prevalence in the preceding year was more than or equal to 10% and less than 20%.
- A reduction of the maximum percentage equal to 2% or less of positive flocks of adult laying hens.
- The Member States has less than 50 flocks of adult laying hens: the target is to have not more than one adult flock remaining positive.

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The Union target shall be achieved every year based on the monitoring of the previous year.

Comments(max. 32000 chars) :

Since 2015, the target threshold of maximum 2% of positive flocks has been reached in Belgium. In 2020 and 2021, the target was exceeded mainly due to the presence of multiple S. Enteritidis positive flocks, raising the prevalence of SE and ST positive flocks to 2.32% in 2020 and 2.18% in 2021. To reduce the prevalence of S. E and S. T positive flocks in laying hens and meet the set targets, Belgium will continue its efforts to raise awareness among poultry farmers especially about the importance of biosafety rules. The new Royal Decree of 21 September 2020 on the control of zoonotic Salmonella in poultry requires that poultry farmers have sufficient knowledge on sampling before to take samples by themselves. A better sampling will better reflect the prevalence in the country. Finally, new vaccines against S. Enteritidis that induce a longer immunity will soon be available in Belgium and will permit to better protect the vaccinated hens. Furthermore, since April 2020, FASFC authorize confirmatory samples only in exceptional cases as determined by the competent authority in accordance with the European legislation. In 2021, no confirmatory sample has been taken in exceptional cases. This might explain the non-achievement of the targets.

2. The programme will be implemented on the **whole territory** of the MS.

yes

no

If No, please explain :

Laying flocks of Gallus gallus

3. Flocks subject to the programme

The programme covers all flocks of adult laying hens of *Gallus gallus* but does not apply to flocks for private domestic use or leading to the direct supply, by the producer, of small quantities of table eggs to the final consumer or to local retail establishments directly supplying the eggs to the final consumer. For the latter case (direct supply), national rules are adopted ensuring *Salmonella* control in these flocks. The programme covers also all rearing flocks of future laying hens.

yes

no

If No, please explain :

	Total number of flocks of layers in the MS	Number of flocks covered by the programme	Number of flocks where FBO sampling shall take place	Number of flocks where official sampling will take place
Rearing flocks	420		420	0
Adult flocks	660	660	640	280
Number of holdings with more than 1,000 laying hens				280
Number of flocks in these holdings				490
<i>NB : All cells shall be filled in with the best estimation available.</i>				

Comments (max. 32000 chars) :

Laying flocks of *Gallus gallus*

4. Notification of the detection of target *Salmonella* serovars

A procedure is in place which guarantees that the detection of the presence of the relevant *Salmonella* serotypes during sampling at the initiative of the food business operator (FBO) is notified without delay to the competent authority by the laboratory performing the analyses. Timely notification of the detection of the presence of any of the relevant *Salmonella* serotypes remains the responsibility of the food business operator and the laboratory performing the analyses.

yes

no

if no, please explain :

5. Biosecurity measures

FBOs have to implement measures to prevent the contamination of their flocks.

yes

no

if no, please explain. If yes, please describe the biosecurity measures that shall be applied, quote the document describing them (if any) (max. 32000 chars) :

The royal decree of 25 June 2018 on the identification and registration of poultry, rabbits and certain hobby poultry (Annex 1) describes the general conditions about the identification and registration of poultry in the Belgian database (SANITEL). Among these requirements, any poultry keeper who is or wishes to be active in the food chain with his poultry or their products (meat or eggs), regardless of the number of poultry heads kept for this purpose, must register in SANITEL. Each departure/arrival of poultry from/to the holdings must be recorded in SANITEL.

The royal decree of 17 June 2013 on animal health conditions governing intra-Community trade in and imports from third countries of poultry and hatching eggs and on the conditions for the authorization of poultry establishments (Annex 2) describes the general conditions the poultry farmer must follow to have an authorization and general biosecurity measures.

The royal decree of 5 May 2008 on the control of avian influenza also describes certain biosecurity measures that must be applied on poultry farms.

Every year, the farm veterinarian must complete a biosecurity questionnaire for each poultry holding (Annex 3) and send it to the FASFC. Investigation focuses on infrastructure, hygiene, management of the exploitation, the transports, the feed and the contacts into the establishment.

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Holdings that are repeatedly positive for *Salmonella* may call upon an accompanying veterinarian for the evaluation of the holding. The salary of the accompanying veterinarian is paid by the FASFC. The accompanying veterinarian is not only for farms with breeding poultry but also for farms with laying hens, broilers and fattening turkeys. The involved veterinarian reports three times a year on the supervision carried out.

6. Minimum sampling requirements for food business operators (FBO):

Samples at the initiative of the FBOs will be taken and analysed to test for the target *Salmonella* serovars respecting the following minimum sampling requirements:

- a. Rearing flocks: day-old chicks, two weeks before moving to laying phase or laying unit
- b. Adults laying flocks: every 15 weeks during the laying period

yes

no

if no, please explain - Indicate also who takes the FBO samples, and, if additional FBO sampling, going beyond the minimum sampling requirements, is performed, please describe what is done.

Each flock of laying hens shall be sampled by the responsible on the poultry holding at the day-old chick stage, during the 2 weeks before moving to the production unit (16 weeks) and from 24 weeks onwards, every 15 weeks. For this purpose, the person in charge may also call upon the farm veterinarian or a laboratory approved by the competent authority for this purpose.

Monitoring is carried out by flock. If the flock is compartmentalized in several poultry houses, sampling must be carried out in each poultry house.

For FBO sampling, the responsible of the poultry holding can rely on official documents (written by the competent authority, FASFC) that detail how *Salmonella* samples are to be taken. Approved laboratories must furnish all necessary equipment to the responsible for *Salmonella* sampling. If needed, the responsible can contact the animal health associations or the competent authority (FASFC) for further details about the sampling. The responsible can also call upon the farm veterinarian or the approved laboratory to perform sampling.

Since 21 September 2020, the national legislation requires that the farm veterinarian assists the responsible holder of taking the samples until the farm veterinarian considers the responsible to have enough knowledge to take the samples himself. The farm veterinarian has to repeat this assistance once a year. A confirmation by the farm veterinarian and the date of its performance shall be entered in the holding register.

7. Samples are taken in accordance with provisions of point 2.2 of Annex to Regulation (EU) No 517/2011

yes

no

if no, please explain :

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8. Specific requirements laid down in Annex II.D of Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 will be complied with where relevant. In particular:

- due to the presence or the suspicion of the presence of SE or ST (including monophasic ST I,4,[5],12:i:-) in the flock, eggs cannot be used for human consumption unless heat treated;
- eggs from these flocks shall be marked and considered as class B eggs.

yes

no

if no, please explain - Indicate also if prompt depopulation of the infected flocks is compulsory.

The point B5 of this document resumes the measures due to the presence or the suspicion of the presence of SE or ST (including monophasic ST I,4,[5],12:i:-) in the flock

9.If birds from flocks infected with SE or ST are slaughtered, please describe the measures that shall be implemented by the FBO and the CA to ensure that fresh poultry meat meet the relevant **EU microbiological criteria** (row 1.28 of Chapter 1 of Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005): absence of SE/ST in 5 samples of 25g:

Measures implemented by the FBO (farm level)

A logistical slaughter is performed in SE and ST positive laying flocks at the end of the production.

Measures implemented by the FBO (slaughterhouse level)

If the hygiene criterium for the regulatory processes Salmonella spp. n=50, c=5 is not met (n>5), the operator has to take immediate corrective measures to restore good hygiene practices and compliance with HACCP procedures. In any case, slaughter hygiene must be improved and process control must be verified. Corrective measures may also consist in assessing the Salmonella status of animals on their holding of origin, assessing the risk during transport of the animals, assessing the cleanliness of the animals, etc. and consequently leading to an adaptation in the policy of animal purchase and/or slaughter management, as well as transport. Corrective measures taken by the operator must be recorded as part of the self-checking system based on HACCP principles.

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If the presence of *Salmonella* spp. is established during the verification of the process hygiene criteria on carcasses, isolates must be serotyped for SE/ST. ST/SE are food safety criteria. If carcasses test positive at slaughterhouse for ST/SE, the carcasses can't be sold as fresh meat. However, as foreseen in art. 7, 2 of Reg. 2073/2005, they can undergo a treatment eliminating the pathogens in an approved establishment, before being put on the market. Fresh meat which is already on the market before the identification of the contamination and serotyping ST/SE, must be withdrawn and recalled from the market. Products placed on the market which are not yet at the retail stage may be subjected to a heat treatment intended and capable of eliminating the SE/ST risk. Operators must establish and apply procedures to ensure that this heat treatment is carried out, including the recording of the application and self-checking of this measure as part of the self-checking system. In case of detection of SE/ST, a notification must be made to the FASFC.

Measures implemented by the CA (farm and slaughterhouse level)

SE and ST positive flocks must be slaughtered according to a logistical slaughter. A document "Food Chain Information" must be sent by the poultry keeper to the slaughterhouse 24h before the slaughter. This document contains information about the sanitary status of animals, the potential use of medicines and all *Salmonella* control results. The slaughterhouse operators only accept the slaughter of animals if this document is available. If a sample is positive for *Salmonella* spp, a serotyping is always done. If less than 5 samples are positive to *Salmonella* spp and no SE or ST is found, the result is satisfying. An action limit (AL) has been set by the FASFC to ensure that corrective measures are taken early if *Salmonella* is detected before the regulatory criterion is exceeded. Action should be taken as soon as the number of positive results (presence of *Salmonella*) reaches the action limit of 3 positive samples. Specific measures (formally = warning or PV) may be imposed by the official veterinarian who finds that the operator is in breach of his obligations.

10. Laboratories in which samples (official and FBO samples) collected within this programme are analysed are accredited to ISO 17025 standard and the analytical methods for *Salmonella* detection is within the scope of their accreditation.

yes

no

If no, please explain :

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11. The **analytical methods** used for the detection of the target *Salmonella* serovars is the one defined in Part 3.2 of the Annex of Regulation (EU) No 200/2010 i.e. Amendment 1 of EN/ISO 6579-2002/Amd1:2007. '*Microbiology of food and animal feeding stuffs - Horizontal method for the detection of Salmonella spp. -- Amendment 1: Annex D: Detection of Salmonella spp. in animal faeces and in environmental samples from the primary production stage*'.

Serotyping is performed following the Kaufman-White-Le Minor scheme.

yes

no

If no please explain.

The point 3.2 of the Regulation (EU) 517/2011 about laying hens has changed and the EN/ISO norm mentioned is not more available. The analytical methods used for the detection are the one defined in points 3.2 or 3.4 of the Annex of RE 517/2011.

Serotyping is performed following point 3.3 or 3.4 of the Annex of RE 517/2011.

The analytical method used for the detection of *Salmonella* spp. is performed according to EN ISO 6579-1.

For samples taken on behalf of the FBO alternative methods if validated in accordance with the most recent version of EN/ISO16140 may be used.

yes

no

If no please explain.

12. Samples are transported and stored in accordance with point 3.1 of the Annex to Regulation (EU) No 517/2011. In particular, samples examination shall start in the laboratory within 4 days after sampling.

yes

no

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If no, please explain :

13. Please describe the **official controls at feed level** (including sampling).

Comments (max. 32000 chars) :

Since 2006, FASFC focus its efforts on microbiological contamination in feed on Salmonella. Special attention is given to the sampling procedure using n=5 and taking into account the heterogenic nature of a possible Salmonella contamination of feed. Feed materials of animal origin, oilseeds and wheat bran, DDGS or compound feed for poultry containing these feed materials, are considered as 'at-risk' products and receive specific focus in the control program. However, also other compound feed for farmed animals and petfood are part of the control program.

Using a statistically substantiated risk evaluation, the FASFC re-evaluates and performs an official control program every year. Compound feed and feed materials are sampled and analysed for absence of Salmonella in 25g.

Analytical method

Food and feed samples are analysed in accredited and by the FASFC approved laboratories using analytical methods which are on an by the FASFC approved list: <http://www.favv-afsca.fgov.be/laboratories/approvedlaboratories/>.

Serotyping is performed on all Salmonella spp. positive results.

In positive samples, measures are taken following the decision tree (Annex 4).

14. Official controls at holding, flock and hatchery level

- a. Please describe the official checks concerning the **general hygiene provisions** (Annex I of Regulation (EC) No 852/2004) including checks on biosecurity measures, and consequences in case of unsatisfactory outcome.

(max. 32000 chars) :

The point 5 of this document resumes the national legislation relative to biosecurity measures.

In laying poultry holdings keeping poultry for export or intra-Community trade, an official visit is performed by the competent authority once a year.

In laying poultry holdings not intended to export or intra-Community trade, an official inspection visit is performed once every 8 years or every 12 years in case of satisfactory results. An official sampling to control Salmonella is also performed once a year in every laying hens holding with more than 1000 birds according to Regulation (EU) 517/2011.

During the official inspection visit, several points relative to general hygiene and biosecurity measures

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are checked. In case of unsatisfactory outcome, a warning or a penalty is given or the authorisation is withdrawn in the event of serious misconduct.

The visit is considered conform or conform with remarks or not conform depending of the gravity of non conformities. In case of results with conform with remarks or not conform, another official visit (or administrative control) is performed within the month to check if the poultry holder has complied with the recommendations. Among these visits with conform with remarks or not conform results, 10 percent will be re-controlled next year.

There is also a guide validated by the competent authority (FASFC) for primary production describing, among other things, the biosecurity measures that poultry farmers must face. The guide defines the biosecurity measures to be applied in accordance with the national legislation in force. The guide is intended for both veterinarians and poultry farmers and includes a series of general opinions and basic principles to avoid antibacterial therapy by working towards disease prevention and control and optimal biosecurity in poultry farms.

b. Routine official **sampling scheme**: EU minimum requirements are implemented i.e. official sampling are performed:

- in one flock per year per holding comprising at least 1,000 birds;
- at the age of 24 +/- 2 weeks in laying flocks housed in buildings where the relevant Salmonella was detected in the preceding flock;
- in any case of suspicion of Salmonella infection when investigating food-borne outbreaks in accordance with Article 8 of Directive 2003/99/EC or any cases where the competent authority considers it appropriate, using the sampling protocol laid down in point 4(b) of Part D to Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003;
- in all other laying flocks on the holding in case Salmonella Enteritidis or Salmonella Typhimurium is detected in one laying flock on the holding;
- in cases where the competent authority considers it appropriate.

yes

no

If no, please explain. - Indicate also 1)if additional official sampling going beyond EU minimum requirements is performed give a description of what is done 2)who is taking the official samples

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c. Official confirmatory sampling (in addition to the confirmatory samples at the holding which are systematically performed if FBO or official samples are positive at the hatchery):

After positive official samples at the holding

- Always
- Sometimes (criteria apply)
- Never

After positive FBO samples at the holding

- Always
- Sometimes (criteria apply)
- Never

When official confirmatory sampling is performed, additional samples are taken for checking the presence of antimicrobials:

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

Please insert any comments. Describe the criteria used to determine if confirmatory sampling is performed. Indicate also which samples (if any) are taken to check the presence of antimicrobials.

Since April 2020 to May 2022, no confirmatory sample has been taken in exceptional cases. If the FASFC considers that there are doubts about the veracity of the result, FASFC authorize confirmatory samples only in exceptional cases as determined by the competent authority in accordance with the European legislation.

Sampling consists in 5 faeces samples and 2 dust samples for salmonella testing.

A mixed sample of muscle tissue from 5 hens is also taken to investigate the use of antimicrobial substances.

The sampling of the confirmatory testing (bacteriology) is performed by the FASFC or by one of the animal health associations. The muscle sampling for the tests on the use of antibiotics is performed by the organization that performs the Salmonella sampling.

The results of the confirmatory sampling are negative if no SE or ST is found and if no antimicrobial substances have been found. Measures are lifted when both results are negative.

If antimicrobials are detected in the flock in which a confirmatory sample was performed, the flock is considered positive. The same consequences than in a flock positive for SE or ST are taken.

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1	2	3	4
For routine samples taken at the holding	No of flocks positive to SE / ST	Out of the flocks in column 2, No of cases where official confirmatory samples ³ were taken	Out of the cases in column 3, No of cases where confirmatory samples were negative
FBO samples ¹	7	0	0
Official samples ²	4	0	0

¹ Reg 517/2011, point 2.2.1 of the Annex

² Reg 517/2011, point 2.2.2 of the Annex

³ Reg 2160/2003, point II.D.4 of the Annex

What happened to the flocks counted under 4 (re checked for the presence of Salmonella? Checked for the presence of antimicrobials?) (max. 32000 chars):

Results in the table above concern the year 2021. No confirmatory analyses were performed in 2021.

- d. Article 2 of Regulation (EC) No 1177/2006 (**antimicrobials** shall not be used as a specific method to control *Salmonella* in poultry): please describe the official controls implemented (documentary checks, sampletaking) to check the correct implementation of this provision. For samples please describe the samples taken, the analytical method used, the result of the tests.

Comments - Describe also if any other measures are implemented(max. 32000 chars) :

According to the royal decree of 21 September 2020 on the control of zoonotic Salmonella in poultry, it is forbidden to use antimicrobials in the treatment of laying poultry against zoonotic Salmonella. This applies not only to the targeted serotypes, but to all zoonotic Salmonella serotypes.

Documentary checks on the use of antimicrobials are carried out during each official control for the presence of salmonella.

At the same time as the official control for the presence of Salmonella, in case of doubt, muscle samples may be taken to determine the use of antimicrobials that may affect the outcome of the Salmonella examination. A mixed muscle sample from 5 hens shall be examined from each sampled flock. A premitest and a test for quinolones shall be performed by a regional laboratory (ILVO). This includes in particular the official studies performed on the other flocks when 1 flock is positive for SE or ST or the official study at 24 weeks of the flock that follows a positive flock. If no samples are taken, there must at least be an administrative check of the contents of the register of medicinal products.

If antimicrobials are detected in the flock, the flock is considered positive. The same consequences as in a flock positive for SE or ST are taken and are described in point A14c. The consequences are also the same

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as for a positive result when antimicrobial testing for confirmatory sampling is performed.

15. *Salmonella* vaccination

Voluntary

Compulsory

Forbidden

Use of *Salmonella* vaccines is in compliance with provisions of Article 3 of Regulation (EC) No 1177/2006.

yes

no

If no, please explain. - If performed please describe the vaccination scheme (vaccines used, vaccines providers, target flocks, number of doses administered per bird, etc) (max. 32000 chars) :

According to the royal decree of 21 September 2020 on the control of zoonotic *Salmonella* in poultry, vaccination of (grand)parents is mandatory against *Salmonella* Enteritidis, the vaccination against *Salmonella* Typhimurium is strongly recommended. The vaccination of selection poultry against *Salmonella* is prohibited. The vaccination is mandatory in all laying flocks participating to the *Salmonella* national control plan. The vaccination is also mandatory for every laying hen intended for trade and for gathering. The laying hens intended for intra-community trade may not be vaccinated. The vaccination is performed by the farm veterinarian. The farm veterinarian may delegate the performance of vaccination to the responsible of the poultry flock, provided that a veterinary guidance agreement has been concluded between the person in charge and the farm veterinarian in accordance with the Royal Decree of 10 April 2000 laying down provisions on veterinary guidance. Live attenuated vaccines against *S. Enteritidis* are used in laying flocks. The attenuated vaccines are administrated with drinking water three times during the rearing period : as day-old chicks, between 6 and 8 weeks and at 16 weeks. The attenuated vaccines contain a specific resistance to an antibiotic that allows to discriminate with a wild strain.

16. System for **compensation to owners** for the value of their birds slaughtered or culled and the eggs destroyed or heat treated.

Describe the system for compensation to owners. Indicate also how improper implementation of biosecurity measures can affect the payment of compensation (max. 32000 chars) :

The loss of value caused by the destruction of day-old chicks is eligible for compensation from the Budgetary Fund for the Health and Quality Animals and Animal Products (the Fund). The compensation amounts to 90% of the loss of value. The amount of compensation is calculated on the basis of value tables drawn up by the sector and validated by the Budget Fund Council. According to the Law on the establishment of a Budget Fund for the health and quality of animals and animal products of 23 March 1998 and the Royal Decree of 24 June 1997 on compulsory contributions to the Fund for the

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health and production of animals established for the poultry sector, the amount and terms of the Fund's interventions are determined by the Ministers for Health and Agriculture. The Fund has a financial reserve which is built up by means of compulsory contributions from the poultry sector as a whole. The reserve is provided for the financing of compensation and the implementation of control programmes. The terms and conditions for the intervention of the Fund are laid down in the Royal Decree of 21 September 2020 on the control of zoonotic Salmonella in poultry. The owner loses all right to compensation if the compulsory vaccination has not been carried out or has been incompletely carried out.

17. Please describe the official procedure to test, after the depopulation of an infected flock, the **efficacy of the disinfection** of a poultry house (No of samples, No of tests, samples taken, etc).

(max. 32000 chars):

After the cleaning and disinfection operations and the introduction of the sanitary vacuum, a hygienogram and a swab test shall be carried out in the hen house by the animal health association. The costs of these tests are charged to the owner.

A swab test consists in 2 samples each consisting of 25 environmental swabs collected from the areas where the flock was housed/will be housed. Swabs are harvested from the most contaminated and critical areas of the hen house.

A hygienogram test consists in 25 Rodac plates.

If the results of the swab tests reveal the presence of zoonotic Salmonella, the poultry house must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected again. These operations are repeated until no further Salmonella is detected. New animals can only be introduced in the absence of Salmonella.

If results of hygienogram give a score higher than 1.5, the poultry house must be cleaned and disinfected again, and a new hygienogram is carried out. New animals may only be introduced when a score of 1.5 or less is obtained;

When the results of hygienogram and swab tests require a new cleaning and disinfection operation, and if the water used for cleaning is taken by catchment, a bacteriological analysis of the water catchment is also mandatory. The water analysis is performed on 1000 ml of water and includes the total number of germs at 22°C (max 100 000 cfu/ml), the total number of E. coli (max 1000 cfu/ml) and the presence of intestinal enterococci (absence in 100 ml). In the presence of a non-compliant result, the use of the water catchment shall be prohibited until further tests demonstrate that the abstraction water complies.

B. General information

1. Structure and organisation of the **Competent Authorities** (from the central CA to the local CAs)

Short description and/or reference to a document presenting this description (max. 32000 chars):

The Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain (FASFC) is the competent authority for the implementation and coordination of the programme. The FASFC has a central administration with 4

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Directorates-General: DG Control Policy (drawing up the control programme, coordination, drafting the necessary national legislation), DG Control (uniform organisation of controls), DG Laboratories (accreditation of laboratories) and DG General Services. Under DG Control there are 9 local control units (LCUs) which are responsible for carrying out the inspections.

According to royal decree of 21 September 2020 on the control of zoonotic Salmonella in poultry, all laying poultry holdings registered to FASFC are covered by the control programme. The industry samples taken from day-old chicks, at 16 weeks and every 15 weeks during production, are taken by the person in charge of the poultry holding, the farm veterinarian or the staff of the approved animal health associations.

The animal health associations are associations approved by the competent authority. The conditions these associations must meet are fixed in the Royal Decree of 26th November 2006 laying down the conditions for the approval of associations for the control of diseases animals and entrusting them with tasks falling within the Agency's competence and in the Ministerial Decree of 26th November 2006 approving associations for the control of animal diseases. There are 2 approved associations in Belgium, one in Flanders and one in Wallonia. The persons in charge of performing Salmonella sampling have been trained to assure sampling are taken according to the Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 and Regulation (EC) 517/2011.

The person in charge shall bring the samples or send them within 24 hours of taking the samples to a laboratory approved by the FASFC for the analysis of the samples. The samples are accompanied by all the necessary information about the holding.

On a monthly basis, the accredited laboratories report all results within the framework of the Salmonella control programme to the FASFC's DG Laboratories. When a zoonotic Salmonella is detected, the laboratory informs the FASFC, the person in charge and the farm veterinarian. Temporary measures are applied until the results of the serotyping are known. When serotyping is done, the lab that performed the serotyping informs the FASFC, the person in charge and the farm veterinarian of the typing result. If the detected Salmonella is one of targeted-serotypes, definitive measures apply. The farm is placed under the supervision of the Agency and the responsible person is informed about the measures to be taken.

2. Legal basis for the implementation of the programme

(max. 32000 chars):

European legislation :

- Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 November 2003 on the control of salmonella and other specified food-borne zoonotic agents 2160/2003
- Commission Regulation (EC) No 1177/2006 of 1 August 2006 implementing Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards requirements for the use of specific control methods in the framework of the national programmes for the control of salmonella in poultry
- Commission Regulation (EU) No 517/2011 of 25 May 2011 implementing Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards a Union target for the reduction of the prevalence of certain Salmonella serotypes in laying hens of Gallus gallus and amending Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 and Commission Regulation (EU) No 200/2010.

National legislation:

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- Law of 4 February 2000 on the creation of the federal agency for the safety of the food chain
- Royal Decree of 22 May 2005 laying down measures for the monitoring of and protection against certain zoonoses and zoonotic agents
- Royal Decree of 21 September 2020 on the control of zoonotic Salmonella in poultry
- Ministerial Decree of 21 September 2020 on the control of zoonotic Salmonella in poultry
- Royal Decree of 17 June 2013 on animal health conditions governing intra-Community trade in, and imports from third countries of, poultry and hatching eggs and on the conditions for authorisation of poultry establishments
- Royal Decree of 25 June 2018 establishing a system for the identification and registration of poultry, rabbits and certain hobby poultry.

3. Give a short summary of the outcome of the **monitoring of the target *Salmonella serovars* (SE, ST)** implemented in accordance with Article 4 of Directive 2003/99/EC (evolution of the prevalence values based on the monitoring of animal populations or subpopulations or of the food chain).

(max. 32000 chars) :

In poultry, the national Salmonella control programme implemented since 2007 including the compulsory vaccination of breeding poultry and laying hens, allowed to significantly reduce the prevalence of *S. Enteritidis* and *S. Typhimurium*.

The prevalence in rearing laying hens has been very low between 2011 and 2021. No flock was positive for SE or ST in rearing laying hens except in 2012, 2015 and 2019 where the prevalence was 0,23%, 0,37% and 0.92% respectively.

In laying hens during production, the prevalence of SE and ST exceeded the 2% threshold in 2012 (2,27%), 2014 (2,02%), 2020 (2.32%) and 2021 (2.18%). Between 2015 and 2019 the prevalence was under the 2% threshold. In 2021, the prevalence was 2.18%.

4. System for the registration of holdings and identification of flocks

(max. 32000 chars) :

The royal decree of 25 June 2018 on the identification and registration of poultry, rabbits and certain hobby poultry describes the general conditions about the identification and registration of poultry in SANITEL, a computerized data-processing system for the identification and registration of animals. Each poultry keeper who is or wishes to be active in the food chain with his poultry or their products (meat or eggs), regardless of the number of poultry heads kept for this purpose, must register in SANITEL. Each departure/arrival of poultry from/to the holdings must be recorded in SANITEL.

The holder of more than 199 hobby poultry and the hobby poultry trader must also register his hobby poultry in SANITEL.

Each flock must be registered in SANITEL and a flock number is attributed. If several flocks of poultry are present in the same holding, each flock must be registered in SANITEL and have an identification number.

Each poultry holder active in the food chain must have a registration from the FASFC. An exception exists for the poultry holder that holds maximum 50 laying hens and that sell their eggs directly to the consumer.

Laying flocks of Gallus gallus

A lot of data are available in SANITEL such as administrative informations, category of poultry, flock capacity, date of birth, data on movements (date of entry/exit). This system for the registration of flocks ensures traceability from the hatchery to the slaughterhouse.

In addition to the registration, each holding with 200 or more laying hens must be authorized by the FASFC with a registration code and an identification number.

5. System to monitor the implementation of the programme.

(max. 32000 chars):

In poultry, a national Salmonella control programme is implemented in Belgium.

According to the Royal Decree of 21/09/2020 on the control of zoonotic Salmonella in poultry, all registered to FASFC farms with breeding poultry of the species Gallus gallus, laying hens, broilers and meat turkeys have to implement the provisions of the national Salmonella control programme.

In laying hens, industry sampling is performed by the FBO in every flock of poultry as day-old-chicks, 2 weeks before the transfer to the laying unit (± 16 weeks), at 24 weeks and then every 15 weeks until the end of the production. Official sampling is performed by the competent authority (FASFC) in every authorized holding of laying hens (holding with more than 200 laying hens).

In day-old-chicks, the sampling is performed at time of delivery to the holding. 20 pieces (min: 5 cm by 5cm, max: 10 cm by 10 cm) of cover sheets soiled with feces are sampled from transport boxes and the sample must be representative of the whole flock. The boot swabs method is used in floor rearing systems. Two pairs of boot swabs are collected per flock and must concern all parts of the poultry house.

In cage laying hens flocks, sampling consists in 2 composite samples of feces per flock. Each sample must contain naturally mixed faeces taken from 60 different places forming a total of 150 g of faeces. The official sampling consists in two pairs of boot swabs (floor rearing system) or 2x150g of feces (cage system) and one dust sample.

Sampling shall be performed in every poultry house but the result applies on the flock level that is registered in SANITEL.

The samples are sent to an approved laboratory by the responsible within 48 hours following the sampling. All necessary information must accompany the samples. Samples are kept cool before the transfer.

Samples are analyzed in accredited and by the FASFC approved laboratories using analytical methods which are on an by the FASFC approved list: <http://www.favv-afsca.fgov.be/laboratories/approvedlaboratories/>.

Serotyping is performed on all Salmonella spp. positive results.

The approved laboratories shall report to the Agency on a monthly basis and in accordance with the instructions of the Agency, the results of all analyses carried out on the samples received, taken under the Salmonella national control programme, the minimum data of the related request for analysis and the additional derived data from SANITEL.

According to the Royal Decree of 21/09/2020 concerning the control of Salmonella in poultry, it is required to vaccinate breeding and laying hens against Salmonella Enteritidis unless the flocks are destined for intracommunity trade or export. The vaccination of elite breeders is prohibited. It is also highly recommended to vaccinate breeding and laying flocks against Salmonella Typhimurium. The vaccination schedule consists in two or three vaccine doses depending on the type of vaccine used. Live attenuated vaccines are administrated in the drinking water at day 1, at 6-8 weeks and about 2 weeks

Laying flocks of *Gallus gallus*

before the transfer to the production unit (16 weeks). Inactivated vaccines are injected at 6-8 weeks and at 16 weeks. It is also forbidden to treat all poultry with antimicrobials against zoonotic *Salmonella*.

The following provisional measures shall be imposed from the time when the analysis of a flock of laying hens detects *salmonella*, until the result of serotyping is known:

- (a) the holding is under the supervision of the Agency and contacts within the holding are limited;
- (b) eggs for human consumption are disposed of for destruction or destined for human consumption after a treatment that ensures the elimination of *salmonella*. Eggs shall be stamped at the holding in accordance with Annex II. D. of Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003;
- (c) the transport of these eggs shall be carried out in accordance with the following provisions:
 - a document containing the dates and results of all examinations on *salmonella* carried out on the flock from which the eggs originate shall accompany the containers;
 - processed eggs and other eggs shall be transported in separate containers;
 - eggs subject to processing shall be collected last;
 - after transport, the means of transport and the transport equipment used must be cleaned and disinfected. Single-use equipment is not reused.

The following definitive measures shall be imposed where the examination of a flock of laying hens detects one of the zoonotic targeted-*salmonella* serotypes or if the animals were set up in a house where *salmonella* was not excluded in accordance with point (f)(i) of that Article:

- (a) the herd is placed under the supervision of the Agency;
- (b) contact with the herd is limited. The person in charge of poultry care, the farm veterinarian, the staff necessary to manage the holding, the competent staff of the Agency or other public services and the persons required to carry out urgent repairs are the only persons who can have access to the poultry house;
- (c) in day-old chicks, these animals shall be destroyed within a period of one month after the date of the initial sampling in which a serotype of zoonotic *salmonella* to be controlled has been isolated;
- (d) eggs shall only be placed on the market for human consumption if they have been treated in such a way as to ensure the elimination of *salmonella*, eggs shall be stamped at the holding in accordance with Annex II. D. of Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003;
- (e) before the next placement of poultry, the house shall be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. The necessary sanitary vacuum is maintained (at least until the hen house is completely dry);
- (f) after the cleaning and disinfection operations and the introduction of the mandatory sanitary vacuum, a hygienogram and a swab test shall be carried out in the hen house. If the result:
 - (i) reveals the presence of zoonotic *salmonella*, the house must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected again. These operations are repeated until no further *salmonella* is detected. New animals can only be introduced in the absence of *salmonella*,
 - (ii) gives a hygienogram score higher than 1.5, the house must be cleaned and disinfected again, and a new hygienogram is carried out. New animals may only be introduced when a score of 1.5 or less is obtained;
- (g) where the results of the operations referred to in point (f) require a new cleaning and disinfection operation, and if the water used for cleaning is taken by catchment, a bacteriological analysis of the water is also mandatory. In the event of a non-compliant result, its use shall be prohibited until further tests demonstrate that the abstraction water complies.

Belgian national legislation does not require a prompt slaughter of positives flocks in laying hen during rearing or production but the measures described above must be applied.

Notification system in place

Laying flocks of Gallus gallus

The notification of the presence of Salmonella in samples taken at primary production is mandatory and must be notified to the FASFC by the responsible of the laboratory.

Laying flocks of Gallus gallus

C. Targets

1 Targets related to flocks official monitoring

1.1 Targets on laboratory tests on official samples for year :

2023

Type of the test (description)	Target population	Number of planned tests
Bacteriological detection test	Laying flocks of Gallus gallus	600
Serotyping	Laying flocks of Gallus gallus	45
Antimicrobial detection test	Laying flocks of Gallus gallus	10
Test for verification of the efficacy of disinfection	Laying flocks of Gallus gallus	0

1.2 Targets on official sampling of flocks for year :

2023

Type of the test (description)	Rearing flocks	Adult flocks
Total No of flocks (a)	420	660
No of flocks in the programme	420	660
No of flocks planned to be checked (b)	0	280
No of flock visits to take official samples (c)	0	280
No of official samples taken	0	840
Target serovars (d)	SE + ST	SE + ST
Possible No of flocks infected by target serovars	1	10
Possible No of flocks to be depopulated	1	0
Total No of birds to be slaughtered/culled	28 000	0
Total No of eggs to be destroyed	Text	0
Total No of eggs to be heat treated	Text	0

Laying flocks of Gallus gallus

- (a) Including eligible and non eligible flocks
- (b) A checked flock is a flock where at least one official sampling visit will take place. A flock shall be counted only once even if it was visited several times.
- (c) Each visit for the purpose of taking official samples shall be counted. Several visits on the same flock for taking official samples shall be counted separately.
- (d) Salmonella Enteritidis and Salmonella Typhimurium = SE + ST
Salmonella Enteritidis, Typhimurium, Hadar, Infantis, Virchow = SE+ ST + SH +SI + SV

2.1 *Targets on vaccination for year :* **2023**

Type of the test (description)	Target on vaccination
Number of flocks in the Salmonella programme	400
Number of flocks expected to be vaccinated	400
Number of birds expected to be vaccinated	10 000 000
Number of doses expected to be administered	23 100 000

Laying flocks of Gallus gallus

E. Financial information

1. Identification of the implementing entities - financial circuits/flows

Identify and describe the entities which will be in charge of implementing the eligible measures planned in this programme which costs will constitute the reimbursement/payment claim to the EU. Describe the financial flows/circuits followed.

Each of the following paragraphs (from a to e) shall be filled out if EU cofinancing is requested for the related measure.

a) Implementing entities - **sampling**: who perform the official sampling? Who pays?
(e.g. authorised private vets perform the sampling and are paid by the regional veterinary services (state budget); sampling equipment is provided by the private laboratory testing the samples which includes the price in the invoice which is paid by the local state veterinary services (state budget))

The official routine sampling is performed and paid for by the Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain (FASFC - state budget). The sampling in the framework of the confirmatory testing, allowed only in exceptional cases, is performed either by the FASFC or by one of the animal health associations and paid by the FASFC. The muscle sampling for the tests on the use of antibiotics is performed by the organization that performs the Salmonella sampling and is paid by the FASFC.

b) Implementing entities - **testing**: who performs the testing of the official samples? Who pays?
(e.g. regional public laboratories perform the testing of official samples and costs related to this testing are entirely paid by the state budget)

The official routine analyses are performed and paid for by the FASFC. The serotyping is performed by the national reference laboratory (Sciensano) and paid by the FASFC. The analyses in the framework of the confirmatory testing (bacteriology) are performed by either the FASFC or by the laboratories of

Laying flocks of Gallus gallus

one of the animal health associations and the serotyping by the national reference laboratory and are paid by the FASFC. The tests on the use of antibiotics are performed by a regional laboratory (ILVO) or the national reference laboratory and are paid by the FASFC.

c) Implementing entities - **compensation**: who performs the compensation? Who pays?
(e.g. compensation is paid by the central level of the state veterinary services,
or compensation is paid by an insurance fund fed by compulsory farmers contribution)

Compensations of the owners are paid by the sanitary fund which is notified to the European Commission (State Aid SA.37414 Belgium 14.03.2014 Adaptation des cotisations au Fonds pour la santé animale (secteur avicole)) and fed by compulsory contributions from the poultry farmers and EU-cofinancing.

d) Implementing entities - **vaccination**: who provides the vaccine and who performs the vaccination? Who pays the vaccine? Who pays the vaccinator?
(e.g. farmers buy their vaccine to the private vets, send the paid invoices to the local state veterinary services which reimburse the farmers of the full amount and the vaccinator is paid by the regional state veterinary services)

The veterinarian of the holding provides and delivers the vaccines. The vaccinator can be the veterinarian of the holding or the responsible of the laying hens if there is a contract of veterinary guidance between the vet and the responsible. The vet sends his invoices for the vaccines straight to the sanitary fund. The invoices are paid after verification (document checks, verification of followed scheme, etc.) within two months after reception. The cost of the administration of the vaccine is paid by the holder of the laying hens.

e) Implementing entities - **other essential measures**: who implement this measure? Who provide the equipment/service? Who pays?

In case of full flock depopulation, the steam cleaning is performed by external specialized companies. When certain requirements are met (Salmonella action plan), the Fund will pay 75% of the cost.

Laying flocks of Gallus gallus

2. Source of funding of eligible measures

All eligible measures for which cofinancing is requested and reimbursement will be claimed are financed by public funds.

yes

no

3. Additional measures in exceptional and justified cases

In the "*Guidelines for the Union co-funded veterinary programmes*", it is indicated that in exceptional and duly justified cases, additional necessary measures can be proposed by the Member States in their application.

If you introduced these type of measures in this programme, for each of them, please provide detailed technical justification and also justification of their cost:

Laying flocks of Gallus gallus

Attachments

IMPORTANT :

- 1) The more files you attach, the longer it takes to upload them .
- 2) This attachment files should have one of the format listed here : **jpg, jpeg, tiff, tif, xls, xlsx, doc, docx, ppt, pptx, bmp, pna, pdf.**
- 3) The total file size of the attached files should not exceed 2 500Kb (+- 2.5 Mb). You will receive a message while attaching when you try to load too much.
- 4) IT CAN TAKE **SEVERAL MINUTES TO UPLOAD** ALL THE ATTACHED FILES. Don't interrupt the uploading by closing the pdf and wait until you have received a Submission Number!
- 5) Only use letters from a-z and numbers from 1-10 in the attachment names, otherwise the submission of the data will not work.

List of all attachments

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